

In this issue:

Environmental review	1
2005–2007 local programs	3
2005–2007 program contacts ..	4
Calendar of events	5
Electronic newsletter	5



Council pursues improvements to environmental review process

Have you ever been frustrated when you weave through the environmental review process for a local transportation project? Many communities are concerned about the amount of time, cost, and, in some cases, the decision-making process utilized in the environmental review process for transportation projects. The Regulatory, Environmental and Legislative (REAL) Committee of the Local Roads and Streets Council (LRSC) has taken the lead to create an initiative to find implementable solutions to streamline the environmental review process. The committee is picking up on the initial concept that was identified by the LRSC Delivery Cost Study Group in their final report prepared in 2000.

An interdisciplinary team of experts has been busy identifying issues and recognizing problems with the current review process for projects that are let to contract by a local unit of government. The group tackling this issue is made up of LRSC members and key staff from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR).

The group is developing a new approach for the delivery of local transportation projects while promoting environmental conservation and protecting environmental resources. The focus of this work effort is on local highways, roads and streets in Wisconsin, and does not include review issues associated with state trunk highway, U.S. highway or interstate highway projects. The group is also concentrating its efforts on environmental review issues related to reconstruction,

[Continued on page 2](#)



*Frank Busalacchi, Secretary,
Wisconsin Department
of Transportation*

Message from WisDOT Secretary Frank Busalacchi

It is truly an honor for me to serve the transportation community and all the citizens of this great state as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. And while I've only served in this capacity for a couple of months, I'm already well aware of the outstanding work and tremendous value of the Local Roads and Streets Council, and I recently had the opportunity to meet with members of the Council's Executive Committee.

Prior to my appointment as WisDOT Secretary, I served as president and secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 200—one of the largest Teamster locals in the state. I've proudly served my local community on the Greater Milwaukee Committee, as president of the Summerfest Board of Directors, Construction Committee Chairman for the Miller Park baseball stadium, and member of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Freeway System Advisory Committee. In addition to my interests in workers, in transportation,

[Continued on page 5](#)



*Don Kush, Council Chair,
Senior Planner with the West Central
Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission*

Message from Council Chair Don Kush

As the newly appointed Chair of the Local Roads and Streets Council, I look ahead to the challenges presented by some very difficult economic times for the state and its local units of government. While state government looks for ways to tighten its fiscal belt over the coming years, it's fairly assured that transportation funds and programs will incur a proportionate impact. The challenge that the Council faces, in its advisory capacity to the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, is to provide local insight on measures to help alleviate the budgetary impacts on the delivery of local transportation projects and services, while continuing to evaluate revenue enhancement alternatives and cost-efficient improvements to existing program delivery mechanisms.

Through a reorganization of the Council's committee structure in 2002, and reaffirmation of its work program for 2003, the Council has positioned itself to continue several initiatives

[Continued on page 2](#)

Council pursues improvements to environmental review process

Continued from page 1

rehabilitation and resurfacing projects. Environmental review issues associated with new construction projects were recognized as a more complex set of concerns better addressed in a separate work effort.

Emmer Shields, Chair of the REAL Committee and Ashland County Highway Commissioner, has taken the lead on this initiative. Other members of the study group that have greatly contributed to the effort include:

REAL committee members:

- **Eugene Lueck**, REAL Committee member and Chair of the Town of Bloomer in Chippewa County
- **Jeff Mantes**, REAL Committee member and Chief Planning and Development Engineer with the City of Milwaukee
- **Dave Waffle**, member of the REAL Committee and City Administrator for the City of Reedsburg

WisDOT staff:

- **Mary Forlenza**, WisDOT Staff Chair to the LRSC
- **Rod Clark**, WisDOT Director of the Bureau of Transit and Local Roads
- **Carol Cutshall**, WisDOT Director of the Bureau of Environment
- **Steve Coons**, WisDOT Local-Federal Unit Leader
- **Jon Novick**, WisDOT Bureau of Environment

WIDNR staff:

- **Dave Siebert**, WIDNR liaison to WisDOT

Other participants:

- **Don Kush**, LRSC Chair and Senior Planner with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- **Jackie Lawton**, Federal Highway Administration

The group met several times with a facilitator to identify common concerns

and problems encountered by local government officials during the environmental review process. These issues were grouped into the following categories:

- Process issues
- Resources—not enough and inexperienced
- Need for best management practices
- Conflicting public interest issues
- Lack of knowledge and/or understanding
- Extended timeframes
- Multiple points of contact
- Need for conflict resolution process
- Need for improved relationships
- Local government shortcomings
- WIDNR shortcomings

An inter-relationship diagram was next developed to gain an understanding of how each of these issues affects other issues. The exercise generated a clear result—that the current environmental review process is the fundamental problem largely responsible for creating a multitude of other frustrations. This finding suggests that addressing the primary issues around the environmental review process will remedy many other related “symptoms”.

It is the REAL Committee’s belief that a new approach or process must be created to replace the current environmental review process. The work group developed the following desired outcomes:

- Process needs to be simplified
- Process time needs to be reduced
- Process costs need to be reduced
- Need to improve WIDNR’s effectiveness in reaching environmental protection goals
- Need to improve local government’s role in protecting the environment
- Need to build trust and partnerships

To help bring these outcomes to fruition, the group conducted a “working” environmental conference on March 25, 2003. The meeting, dubbed “Transportation and the Environment—Promoting and Protecting the Public Interest,” was crafted as a working conference to explore solutions that build on these outcomes. Approximately 50 stakeholders with expertise in the environmental review process participated in the conference. WisDOT Secretary Frank Busalacchi, WIDNR Secretary Scott Hassett and FHWA Division Administrator Bruce Matzke kicked-off the conference with opening remarks.

Continued on page 5

Council Chair’s message

Continued from page 1

that have taken on a greater importance in light of the current budgetary problems. While some committee tasks are still unfolding, others have been actively engaged in addressing a number of the priority issues identified for 2003. Some of these early committee activities include the following:

- The **Executive Committee** met with the newly appointed Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Frank Busalacchi, in early February to brief the Secretary on the Council’s activities and to seek his input for the Council’s continuing advisory service to his office. Ruben Anthony, Jr., WisDOT Deputy Secretary, and Randy Romanski, WisDOT Executive Assistant, also represented the Secretary’s office at the meeting. I believe that I can say on behalf of the Executive Committee that a favorable impression was mutually shared between the Secretary’s office and the Committee.

The expression of confidence and support by the Secretary for the Council’s activities and continuing advisory role is greatly appreciated. His direct approach to issues was also well received. Understandably, the currently unfolding budgetary process will need to play out further before the Secretary can provide direction for the Council on new or reprioritized initiatives. The Executive Committee looks forward to a continued partnership between the Secretary’s office and the Council on shared state and local roadway issues.

- The **Local Transportation Financing Committee** continues to monitor state and federal budget deliberations and, along with members of the Executive Committee, participated in a WisDOT-sponsored meeting in early February on the reauthorization of the federal transportation budget.

Beth Nachreiner, WisDOT’s Federal Relations Liaison, conducted the strategizing session in preparation for a briefing of federal legislators from Wisconsin on federal transportation budget issues of concern to the state. This Committee’s activities will ramp up once the trickle down effect of the federal and state budget deliberations are known at the local program level.

Continued on page 3

Council Chair's message

Continued from page 2



- The **Regulatory, Environmental and Legislative Committee** has undertaken a monumental task that will start to bear fruit with a workshop near the end of March focused on the interaction of environmental compliance regulations and local transportation projects. This workshop's ultimate goal is to try to achieve a greater efficiency and effectiveness in the administration and implementation of environmental and transportation projects and programs at the local level.

Please refer to the accompanying article in this newsletter for more detail. This Committee will also be looking into the regulatory issue of overweight truck loadings and their impact on the local road system. Both of these initiatives have become extremely time sensitive as state and local governments place an increasing emphasis on infrastructure preservation, while continuing to search for more ways to maintain an acceptable level of public services with less financial resources.

- The **Infrastructure Management Committee** will continue to monitor and provide input into the finalization and deployment of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR), a major area of emphasis for both local and state government. Due largely to the impact of the WISLR project and its importance to the local road element in the update to the state long range transportation plan, this Committee will also work closely with WisDOT planning personnel in defining local road infrastructure needs.

Another initiative that this Committee will be pursuing will be the use of best management practices by local units of government to help streamline the delivery of transportation

Continued on page 4

2005–2007 program for local governments

Local guidelines available

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) guidelines for project requests for the 2005–2007 local programs' cycle were distributed to WisDOT's district offices on February 28, 2003. The three federal transportation improvement programs include:

- Surface Transportation Urban (STP-Urban);
- Surface Transportation Rural (STP-Rural); and
- Local Bridge Improvement Assistance (Local Bridge Program).

Wisconsin approves projects under these programs based on a three-year program cycle. This timeframe recognizes the ever-increasing complexity of local projects and a need to encourage greater program stability. For 2005–2007 this means "refreshing" the last year of the previous program cycle, 2005, and adding two more years (2006 and 2007) of funding. Refreshing 2005 means examining the level of projects already approved for 2005, then incorporating additional dollars in the event they become available.

WisDOT is currently operating under the 2001–2003 Wisconsin biennial budget and is programming projects for state fiscal years 2005–2007. Actual funding levels for each program will ultimately be based on reauthorization of the upcoming federal 2004–2009 Transportation Act, and the 2003–2005 state biennial budget now under consideration.

Policy changes

- 2000 census population data will be used for the 2005–2007 program cycle.
- Metropolitan planning organization (MPO) state/municipal project agreements will be required to be capped at the federal amount approved.
- Local bridge projects must be authorized for charging within the approved cycle per TRANS 213 for either replacement or rehabilitation.
- Project requests for structures over the federal sufficiency rating thresholds of less than 80 for rehabilitation and less than 50 for replacement as explained in TRANS 213 will not be accepted.
- Access to the Local Programs' Guidelines (06-03-02) will be available via the Internet by the end of March: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/

- A pilot designed for locals and WisDOT district staff to jointly evaluate potential local projects prior to submitting them to WisDOT is underway. Several WisDOT transportation districts are participating in the pilot.
- The purpose of this effort is to improve program stability by providing more accurate cost estimates and realistic delivery timelines for local highway and bridge projects at the outset, saving locals and WisDOT time and cost in delivering these projects.

Tools to assist all districts and locals in this area are being developed and will be available by the end of March on WisDOT's Web site at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/

Funding availability

Funding will remain at 2003–2005 levels and will be updated as necessary pending any federal or state changes.

STP-Urban: The estimate is \$44,163,600 federal funds per year for 2006 and 2007. STP-Urban projects are funded 80% federal, and 20% local, except within an urbanized area. For urbanized areas, WisDOT allows approval of projects as low as the 50% federal limit and 50% local.

STP-Rural: The estimate is \$25,927,400 federal funds per year for 2006 and 2007. STP-Rural projects are funded 80% federal, and 20% local.

Local Bridge: The estimate is \$34,760,000 (\$26,290,000 federal and \$8,470,000 state) per year for 2006 and 2007. Local bridge projects are funded 80% federal or state, and 20% local.

Approval timeline

STP-Urban	Friday, July 4th
STP-Rural	Friday, July 25th
Local Bridge	Friday, August 29th

The Approved Project List will be available for consultants and the general public on WisDOT's Web site 15 business days following district notification and will not include approved funding levels by project.

Questions, contact:

Steve Coons, Unit Leader
Local Federal Unit, Local Transportation Programs & Finance Section
WisDOT Bureau of Transit & Local Roads
steven.coons@dot.state.wi.us
(608) 267-4459

Council Chair's message

Continued from page 3

projects. Once again, the emphasis is on efficiency and cost reduction by reducing engineering and administrative costs and streamlining policy and design requirements.

- The **Education and Communication Committee** continues to play a pivotal role for the Council's activities in 2003. In addition to disseminating information about the Council and its activities through this newsletter, members will continue to pursue outreach opportunities throughout the state to exchange information with local officials on transportation issues.

The Committee's past assistance with PASER and WISLR training for local officials will likely be called upon again this year to assist local governments in complying with the next required pavement rating submittal. In response to budget constraints, the Committee has transitioned the newsletter to an electronic format for cost-efficient distribution via e-mail, and has been provided with a home page on WisDOT's Web site for further information and outreach activities.

In addressing some of the Council's work program activities for 2003, I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the dedicated WisDOT staff that lends their support and assistance to these activities and to the overall success of the Council's endeavors. When the new Secretary says that he has "heard good things" about the Council, that's not only a positive reflection on those who volunteer their time on behalf of the Council, but also on the WisDOT staff who are committed to this cooperative state and local venture.

I believe that some significant strides have been made since the Council's inception in 1995, but that it is only the beginning of what can be accomplished through this partnership. As I look ahead to the changing times that we are all facing, I am confident that the non-status quo perspective that the Council embodies will continue to make contributions to the betterment of transportation in Wisconsin, and I look forward to being a part of that process.

WisDOT program contacts

With changes at WisDOT and on-going turnover at the local level, it makes sense to periodically update key contact information on the various local road, bridge and multi-modal programs available to local governments. Below is a listing of the program managers for each of the programs administered by the WisDOT Local Transportation Programs and Finance Section. As a reminder, the WisDOT Web site provides additional information on the programs below on the "Programs for Local Government" Web page. Please visit this Internet site at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/index.htm or click on the links below for individual program information.

General Transportation Aids program

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/gta.htm>

Primary contact: *Scott Bush*, (608) 266-0254, scott.bush@dot.state.wi.us

Backup: *Maria Cole*, (608) 264-7336, maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us

Connecting Highway Aids (CHA) program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/connecting.htm

Primary contact: *Scott Bush*, (608) 266-0254, scott.bush@dot.state.wi.us

Backup: *Maria Cole*, (608) 264-7336, maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us

Expressway Policing Aids (EPA) program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/expressway.htm

Primary contact: *Scott Bush*, (608) 266-0254, scott.bush@dot.state.wi.us

Backup: *Maria Cole*, (608) 264-7336, maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us

Local Roads Improvement Program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/lrip.htm

Primary contact for communities within WisDOT districts 3, 4, 7 & 8:

Maria Cole, (608) 264-7336, maria.cole@dot.state.wi.us

Primary contact for communities within WisDOT districts 1, 2, 5 & 6:

Janice Watzke, (608) 266-9497, janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us

Flood Damage Aids (FDA) program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/flood.htm

Janice Watzke, (608) 266-9497, janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us

County Forest Road Aids

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/forest.htm

Emily Jorenby, (608) 266-2574, emily.jorenby@dot.state.wi.us

Lift Bridge Aids (LBA) Program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/liftbridge.htm

Emily Jorenby, (608) 266-2574, emily.jorenby@dot.state.wi.us

Surface Transportation Urban (STP-Urban) Program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/stp-urban.htm

Primary central office contact: *Steve Coons*, (608) 267-4459, steven.coons@dot.state.wi.us

Central office backup: *Alex Zanello*, (608) 266-1535, alex.zanello@dot.state.wi.us

Surface Transportation Rural (STP-Rural) Program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/stp-rural.htm

Primary central office contact: *Steve Coons*, (608) 267-4459, steven.coons@dot.state.wi.us

Central office backup: *Alex Zanello*, (608) 266-1535, alex.zanello@dot.state.wi.us

Local Bridge Improvement program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/highways/bridgeprogram.htm

Primary central office contact: *Steve Coons*, (608) 267-4459, steven.coons@dot.state.wi.us

Central office backup: *Alex Zanello*, (608) 266-1535, alex.zanello@dot.state.wi.us

Local Transportation Enhancement (TE) program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/te.htm

John Duffe, (608) 264-8723, john.duffe@dot.state.wi.us

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/cmaq.htm

John Duffe, (608) 264-8723, john.duffe@dot.state.wi.us

Surface Transportation Discretionary Program (STP-D)

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/stp-discretionary.htm

John Duffe, (608) 264-8723, john.duffe@dot.state.wi.us

Secretary's Message

Continued from page 1

and my local community, I've worked as a truck driver, giving me a first-hand opportunity to see "where the rubber meets the road."

I firmly believe that a quality state and local transportation system serves as the "engine" that "drives" our economy. Many of you may have already seen results of a recent study commissioned by the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin that verifies what many of us suspected all along: that every dollar invested in transportation offers returns several times over in the form of economic development and enhanced safety.

Still, all of us understand that Wisconsin is in the midst of a difficult and challenging budgetary period that will require the collective ingenuity of the LRSC and our many other partners. I pledge to continue the strong working relationship I've inherited with the LRSC, and look forward to working with all of you to identify the needs of our local roads network and the solutions to meet them. We must remember that every challenge before us represents an opportunity for cooperation and innovation. Our department is truly fortunate to have strong and capable partners like the LRSC ready to assist us in meeting our statewide transportation goals in the months and years ahead. I look forward to working with all of you.

Environmental Review

Continued from page 2

Invited stakeholders included representatives from the Wisconsin County Highway Association, the Wisconsin Towns Association, the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities, the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association, consulting engineers, Trout Unlimited, regional entities, WisDOT, WIDNR and FHWA. Participants were divided into six groups and collectively recommended solutions to a specific problem area along with suggesting measures of success for the topic. Once the results are prioritized, this information will be the jumping off point for working groups to implement the recommendations.

The Local Roads and Streets Council would like to thank the many different people and agencies that have invested a significant amount of time and effort on this topic. Future updates on this important initiative will be provided through this newsletter and other venues.



Calendar of events

Local Roads and Streets Council meetings are held every other month in the city council chambers in Wisconsin Rapids beginning at 10 a.m. The meeting schedule for 2003 is: May 7, July 9, September 10 and November 5.

Interested people are invited to attend council meetings.

Various LRSC committee meetings are also typically held every other month in locations around the state. Please contact WisDOT's Janice Watzke at janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us or (608) 266-9497 to confirm meeting dates and times.

April 23–24, 2003: Wisconsin County Highway Association, Commissioner Training, Baymont Inn & Suites, Waupaca.

June 2–5, 2003: Wisconsin County Highway Association, Summer Conference, Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells. For additional information, please visit the WCHA Web site at www.wcha.ticon.net

September 14–17: Wisconsin Counties Association, 65th WCA Annual Convention, Radisson Hotel, La Crosse. For additional information, please contact WCA at (608) 663-7188 or (866) 404-2700, or visit their Web site at www.wicounties.org/

October 5–8: Wisconsin Towns Association, 2003 Convention, Regency Suites, Green Bay. For additional information, please contact WTA at (715) 526-3157.

October 29–31: League of Wisconsin Municipalities, 105th Annual Conference, Hyatt Regency, Milwaukee. For additional information, please contact LWM at (608) 267-2380 or in-state at (800) 991-5502, or visit their Web site at www.lwm-info.org/

November 5–7: American Public Works Association–Wisconsin Chapter, Fall Conference, Pleasant Prairie. For additional information, please contact Michael Pollocoff at (262) 694-1403.



Electronic newsletter

The Local Roads and Streets Council newsletter is available exclusively in an electronic format.

The newsletter is sent via e-mail to the addresses we have on file in our newsletter distribution list. The newsletter is also available on the Internet through the WisDOT

Web site at www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/lrsc/newsletters.htm

Copies of previous issues of the newsletter are also available on the Internet at the same address. To add or change e-mail addresses in the newsletter distribution list, please contact the LRSC via e-mail at lrsc@dot.state.wi.us or contact WisDOT's Janice Watzke at janice.watzke@dot.state.wi.us or (608) 266-9497.

Questions

Please e-mail the council with your questions at lrsc@dot.state.wi.us or contact:

Don Kush, Council Chair
(715) 836-2918 dkush@wcurpc.org

Mary Forlenza, WisDOT Staff Chair
(608) 264-8724 mary.forlenza@dot.state.wi.us